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TAGS: PREL UNSC KPKO ET ER
SUBJECT: UNMEE CONSULTATIONS

¶1. This is an action request. USUN is instructed to draw upon the following elements during UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) consultations on Tuesday, April 22, 2008.

Begin Elements.

-The U.S. welcomes the Special Report of the Secretary General on UNMEE, which addresses a topic of considerable importance. The circumstances which have forced UNMEE's relocation from Eritrea have grave implications not only for this operation but for peacekeeping in general. With that in mind, I would like to make six points:

-First, we would like to express our deep appreciation to troop contributing countries for their invaluable contributions to the Mission and we deeply regret that UNMEE troops have been faced with such difficult circumstances.

-Second, the U.S. recalls that in paragraph 15 of article 4 of the Algiers Peace Agreement, the parties agreed that decisions of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) are final and binding, a point noted by the Secretary General and the Security Council.

-We concur with the Secretary General's assessment that non-implementation of the delimitation decision, as well as the erosion of other aspects of the Algiers Agreements, continue to undermine the prospects of lasting peace between the two countries. As the Security Council has persistently urged, both parties must take concrete steps to immediately and without pre-conditions implement the final and binding delimitation decision of the EEBC and comply fully with the Algiers Agreements.

-Third, the U.S. strongly condemns the restrictions that Eritrea has imposed on UNMEE since early 2004, including the stoppage of all fuel supplies to the Mission and the obstacles these restrictions posed to the performance of its duties. We demand that Eritrea cooperate fully with the safeguarding and withdrawal of UN-owned and contingency-owned equipment.

- Fourth, we are concerned about movements of the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF) into the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), and we condemn recent provocative activities by Eritrea near Bure. These actions risk further destabilizing the region. We urge both sides to show maximum restraint.

- Fifth, we support the Secretary General engaging with both parties on how the UN might most effectively facilitate implementation of agreements that the parties have entered into, and what UN presence in the area would be most effective drawing from the four options recommended in paragraph 54 of his report. Furthermore, the U.S. urges Ethiopia and Eritrea to accept the Secretary General's good

offices.

-The U.S. stresses that the two parties bear the primary responsibility to resolve their border dispute, and as the Secretary General has stated, they should muster the

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political will to take the steps necessary to address the legitimate legal, political and security concerns of the other. To accomplish this, it is necessary that the parties engage on the issues that divide them. We urge the parties to avail themselves of the Secretary General's offices to facilitate these discussions.

- Finally, we recall paragraph 47 of the Secretary General's report which notes that Eritrea's military occupation of the TSZ and the restrictions it has imposed on UNMEE have

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undermined the very basis of the Mission's mandate. Unless Eritrea is willing to lift restrictions and allow UNMEE to execute its mandate, we strongly support and urge the Council to consider ending the Mission by May 31. This should be enough time to determine what UN presence, if any, would be acceptable to the parties.

End Elements.

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